of credit at concessional rate for Public Distribution System?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY): (a) to (c) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is expected to provide credit only for production oriented activities. As Public Distribution System (PDS) is purely a trading activity, the co-operative banks may have to support the scheme out of their own resources.

Agreement on Pension Scheme

6900. SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an Agreement was signed between Indian Banks' Association and various Trade Unions of bank employees on Pension Scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government are thinking to implement pension scheme in Nationalised Banks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY): (a) and (c) Yes, Sir. The Scheme will become operational after the formalities of setting up of pension funds by individual banks etc. have been finalised.

(b) The salient features of the Scheme which is generally on the lines of the pension scheme in the Govt. of India, are as under:—

(i) The pension scheme will cover all the employees|officers who joined the bank on or after 1-11-93.

(ii) Employees|officers in service as on 31-10-93 shall have the option either to avail the existing retirement benefits, viz., CPF and gratuity or opt for pension in lieu of CPF.

(iii) As a special dispensation, employees who retired between 1-1-86 and 31-10-1993, have the option to refund the bank's contribution to the CPF and interest thereon together with further interest at the rate of 6 per cent from the date of receipt of CPF contribution to the date of its repayment to the bank and become entitled to pension scheme.

(iv) The scheme also provides for pension to officials seeking voluntary retirement after 20 years or more of service by giving three months' notice in writing to the competent authority.

Term of the Chairman of Unit Trust of India

6901. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) when the term of the present Chairman of Unit Trust of India (UTI) came to an end, when his term was extended and for what period;

(b) whether Government will take steps either to extend his term to a reasonable period or find out a full time permanent Chairman;

(c) if not, what other steps are being taken by Government to remove uncertainty at top level of Unit Trust of India;

(d) how many vacancies are there at top level of UTI presently and details of each vacancy, date on which each occurred and the steps taken to fill them up;

(e) the total assets of the UTI and also the number of Unit holders;

(f) how many schemes are being presently under UTI; and

(g) whether this uncertainty will affect the growth of UTI and its schemes and also future plans?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY): (a) to (c) The term of the present Chairman of UTI came to an end on 29-03-1995.

It has been extended by 3 months. The question of uncertainty has not arisen as the post has not been kept vacant.

(d) UTI has stated that there is no vacancy at its top management level.

(e) Total investible funds of UTI amounted to Rs. 61.638 crores as on 28-2-1995. The number of outstanding unitholding accounts was 483 lakhs as on 30-4-1995.

(f) There are 58 schemes presently in operation.

(g) Does not arise in view of reply to (a) to (c) above.

Government to examine private participation in Cellular Telephone Projects

6902. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Finance Ministry is examining the conditions laid down by the Communications Ministry for private sector particiation in basic and Cellular Telephone Projects;

(b) if so, what aspects of the projects are being examined; and

(c) what are the reasons for this exercise by Finance Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY): (a) to (c) Ministry of Finance is not involved in the examination of the individual private sector projects for basic and cellular telephone services. However, Finance Secretary is a Member of the Telecommunications Commission which formulates the broad guidelines for private sector participation in Cellular Mobile Phone services and Basic Phone services.

Public issue of Essar Oil Limited

6903. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 201 given in the Rajya Sabha on 28th March, 1995 and state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Essar Oil Limited in its public issue prospectus had mentioned that for part financing its refinery project, the company will raise Rs. 300 crores through a planned Euro Issue and Rs. 815 crores through Euro/Debt. Bonds extorial Commercial Borrowing in the year 1996-97;

(b) if so, whether the company had obtained prior in principal approvals from the Government for raising the money abroad in the year 1996-97;

(c) if not, whether the company have taken the investor for a ride by mentioning in the prospectus mean of finance which were purely a matter of Government policy subject to changes;

(d) if so, whether SEBI's vetting the prospectus was in order, particularly when the means of finance of the refinery project remained united to the extend of Rs. 1500 crores; and

(e) whether Government are aware that in the past an Essar Group company for their Rs. 1264 crores HR coils project had left Rs. 700 crores untiled at the time of its public issue of Rs. 500 crores way back in 1989; and

(f) what safeguards Government are taking to prevent such a recurrence in the case of the public issue in question relating to Refinery project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. However, the fact that the funds were yet to be tied up was mentioned in the prospectus and also given as a risk factor on the cover page of the prospectus, SEBI had ensured adequate disclosure in the prospectus so that the investors could make informed decisions.

(e) Yes, Sir. The project was appraised by Financial Institutions and the required means of finance were tied up.